



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

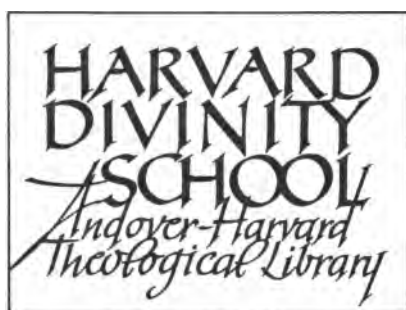
We also ask that you:

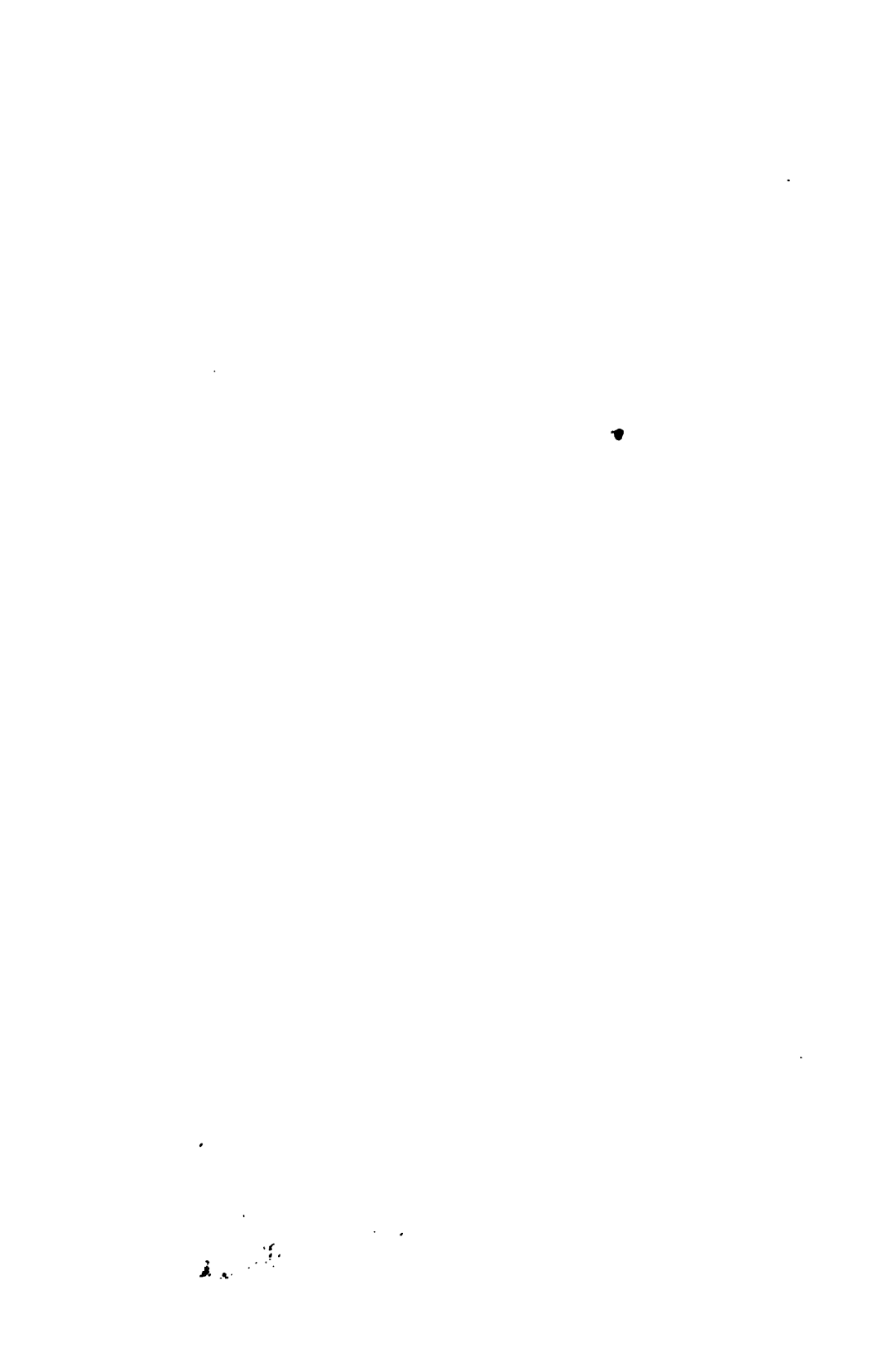
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

BL
1265
.R3
A3
1879A





RAMMOHAN BOY.

W. ADAM PEO.

Commissioner of Penitentiaries, New York
 Prison, and Oregon, during the absence
 of Lord Wm. C. Belmont, Co-
 Secy.; and Director of the Bu-
 reau of Prisons.

SECRET
T-100-100-100-100

Forwards of the University of California, Berkeley, California.

Category:

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY J. R. ... OF ...

1879.

A
LECTURE
ON THE
LIFE AND LABOURS
OF
RAMMOHAN ROY.

BY

W. ADAM, ESQ.

*Commissioner of Vernacular Education in Bengal,
Behar, and Orissa, during the Administration
of Lord Wm. C. Bentinck, Governor
General; and Author of the Educa-
tional Reports.*

EDITED BY

RAKHAL-DAS HALDAR,

*Uncovenanted Civil Service, Bengal;
Formerly, of the University Hall, Gordon Square,
London.*

Calcutta :

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY G. P. ROY & CO., FOR THE EDITOR,
21, Bow Bazar Street.

1879.

3L
1265
.R3
h3
1879a

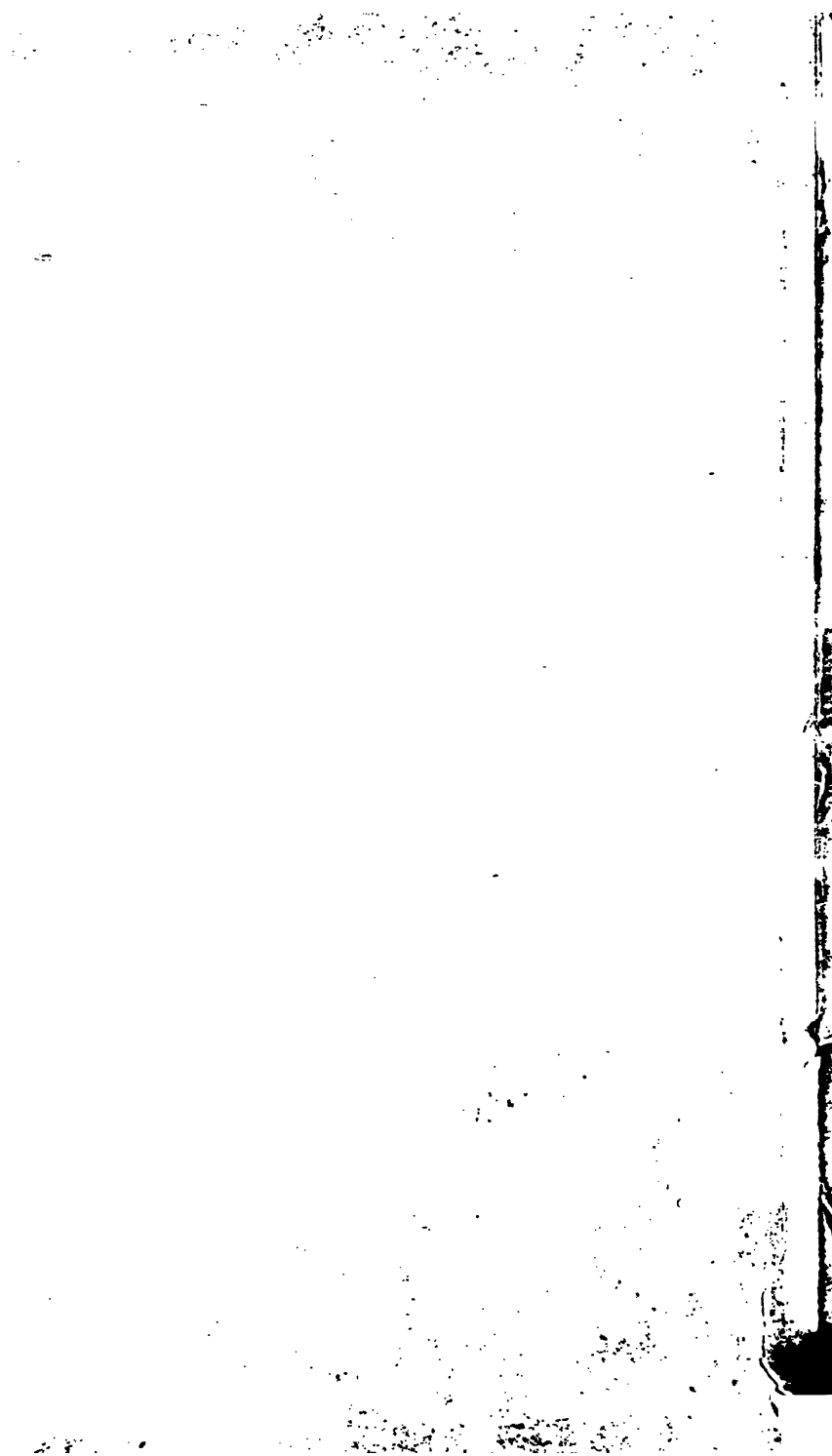
PREFATORY NOTE.

The following Lecture, of which the original MS was obtained by me from the Author in 1862^{in London} is presented to the public for the first time in a printed form. I owe an apology to the venerable Author for falling so far short of his expressed hope, that everything should be done in the getting up of the essay, so as to show respect to the memory of Rammohun Roy. The defects of the present Edition, for which I alone am responsible, could only have been remedied with more leisure at my command; but I feel confident that the lecture, even in its present shape, will amply repay perusal.

RANCHI,
CHUTIA NAGPUR,
1st September 1879. }

R. D. H.

1. p. 4 - Addressing an audience, at Boston, U.S.A.
2. p. 14 - "About ten years ago" would make the date 1858, when Mr. Adam, after leaving India went to U.S.A.
3. See top Prefatory Note, also R. D. Halder's "The Englishman of our Indian Friend", published, 2222, 1903, p. 28. Mr. Halder got the MSS. of this lecture of Mr. Adam at Ranchi, 1879.
4. Lecture published at Ralautta (the author at Ranchi) in 1879.
5. No reference is made to the "Venerable Author" Adam was alive in 1879.



LECTURE

ON THE

LIFE AND LABOURS

OF

RAMMOHUN ROY.

Asia is usually and justly considered as the cradle of civilization.* Even if we limit our attention to what is called the profane or secular history of that quarter of the world; even if we exclude all reference to the records of our religion—to the personages whom they bring to our view, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles—and to the sacred and salutary power which they have exerted upon mankind by their examples in life and in death, by their writings, by their labours, and by their sacrifices: we shall not only perceive the vast influence, which, by means of commerce, emigration, colonization, and conquest, it has exerted on the destinies of the human race, but we shall also discover, by a still more minute survey, numerous individual examples of almost every description of moral and intellectual excellence. If military genius is deemed an excellence, Asia, in comparatively modern times only, has her Mahmood of

* In the East is the source of day! From the East light has shone upon the world.—*Author.*

Ghazni, her Chenghiz Khan, her Timurlang, and her Nadir Shah, who conquered countries and committed atrocities enough to eclipse the exploits of Alexander and Napoleon. If the love of liberty exalts a people in their own esteem and in that of the world, nowhere are impatience of restraint, and personal independence stronger and more indomitable than among the Arabs of the desert, the tribes of Central Asia, and the Rajputs of India. If it is honorable to an age, or a nation, to have produced reformers of philosophy and religion, what merely human influence can be compared either in extent or in potency with that which has been exercised by Confucius in China or by Mohamnad over the multitudinous nations and tribes that have embraced his religion? If the possession of high intellectual powers, if devotedness to intellectual pursuits, if the encouragement given to learning, if the honour and admiration bestowed on those who cultivate it, are characteristics of an advanced stage of civilization, then nowhere in Europe or America are these characteristics found in a higher degree than in the Mohammadan countries of Asia where the endowed establishments of learning are numerous and wealthy,—in Hindustan, where amongst Hindoos as well as Musálmans, there exists a large class of men, set apart from the rest of the community, and professionally and permanently devoted to the pursuit of learning from the early dawn of youthful intelligence to the decrepitude of old age,—and in China, where literature is expressly patronized by the Government, and where literary acquirement is by law and regulation, the passport to social considerations, and

to political office, honour, and emolument. Again, if the prevalence of the domestic and personal virtues throws a grace and a beauty over human life, and constitute the source of much of human happiness, and the substance of much of human excellence, then, is that excellence possessed in no mean degree by the civilized nations of the East, amongst whom temperance, hospitality, and the mutual respect, affection, and kindness of relatives are largely practised and ~~are~~ everywhere venerated and upheld by the force of public sentiment.

But, while the claims of Eastern nations to our respect are on many grounds unquestionable, there is a class of virtues, and a class of good and great men belonging in an eminent degree to Christian countries, of which scarcely any examples are found in the countries of Asia. *Philanthropy*,—a self-sacrificing philanthropy—that pure, generous, and lofty enthusiasm, which inspires the soul, and teaches and enables a man calmly to put aside the seductions of pleasure and the smiles of the world, and to live, to act, to think only or chiefly for the benefit of others with whom he has no personal, domestic, social, or even national ties—this is a virtue which seems almost exclusively of Christian growth, and the very conception of which appears foreign to most Asiatic minds. Self-sacrifice is common both in idea and in act, but self-sacrifice for the good of others—to seek out the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, the despised, the enslaved, and by active exertion and self-denying labour, to relieve, to instruct, to elevate, to rescue these objects of compassion, and to train the mind by a noble discipline, to respect even the lowest and most degraded

forms of humanity—this is a virtue which at least does not abound in Asia, and of which I must acknowledge that I have not met with many examples. She has no Howards to visit the manacled prisoner putrifying in his loathsome dungeon ; no Abbé de l'Épées to pour light into the darkened and secluded mind of the deaf mute ; no Wilberforces to expose the horrors and crimes of the slave-trade ; no Anthony Benezits to devote their labours and their means for the improvement of a degraded population. This is a class of virtues, to which Asiatics have not as yet in any eminent degree attained. This is a class of great men of which Asia has not been remarkably productive. If the examples are few, it is the more important that we should prize and honour those who trampling under foot all personal considerations, and tearing asunder all social entanglements, have dared in the midst of prevalent apathy and selfishness, and in opposition to low and mean interests, to vindicate in the face of the world the universal and inalienable rights of truth, justice, and humanity. I accordingly propose to request your attention on the present occasion* to a brief sketch of the philanthropic labours of Rammohun Roy, whose name probably is not unknown to most of you, and who, I hope to show you, was one of those men who by devoting themselves to the welfare of others, contribute largely to increase the sum of human happiness, to promote the cause of improvement and civilization, and to give a character to their age and country. I must warn you that I do not profess to give you a complete view of his character ; that I purposely

* The Author was addressing an Audience, in the City of Boston in America.

exclude whatever can be deemed in a Christian country of sectarian or limited interest; that I embrace only those of his labours that contemplated the improvement of the general condition of society, and that even of these, I shall be able to give only a most imperfect account within the brief time to which I must confine this address.

1. The first object of benevolent exertion to which Rammohun Roy directed his attention, and of which he never lost sight during the whole course of his life was to convince his countrymen of the evils of idolatry and to stimulate them to throw off its yoke. This was not the effect of sectarian zeal, for he attached himself to no sect exclusively, and united cordially with all, whether Hindoos or Musalmans, Jews or Christians, who united cordially with him in promoting this common object, but it was the effect of a deep inwrought conviction early acquired, and matured by observation and reflection, that idolatry was not only inconsistent with the truth of God and the laws of nature, but that it was, as all violations of that truth and those laws must be, a fruitful source of degradation, vice, and misery, personal, social, and national. No one was more competent to form a sound judgment on such a subject, and no one could arrive at this conclusion less exposed to the imputation of interested motives. He was born a Brahman, and brought up as an idolater. His family ancient and honourable in its own right, was connected by marriage with other families equally ancient and honourable, and still more sacred in their character, the very props of Hindooism in Bengal. He had thus

the amplest opportunities of witnessing, and the unquestioned right to exercise all the arbitrary powers, all the spiritual tyranny with which Hindooism invests the Brahmans, its twice-born favourites; while in the hundreds and thousands of cringing, crouching serfs by whom he was surrounded from his earliest youth, obedient to his nod, proud of the slightest notice from him and incapable, or if capable, not permitted to exert a single independent thought of their own—in these, he saw the depth and extent of the degradation to which the religious system, of which by birth he formed a part, condemned the inferior castes composing the large majority of the community. His father* was a man of strenuous orthodoxy: of an acute mind, he early perceived the budding infidelity of his younger son; and of an affectionate heart, he deeply lamented it. He died, as Rammohun Roy himself informed me, with the most religious devotion, and trust, calling on the name of the God in whom he believed.† His mother was equally earnest in the religious faith in which she had been educated, and when the death of Rammohun Roy's elder brother‡ made him the head of the family, she instituted suits against her son both in the King's and Company's Courts, with a view to disinherit him as an apostate and infidel which according to strict Hindoo Law excludes from the present, and disqualifies for the future, possession of any ancestral property, and even according to many authorities, of any property that is

* Rammohun Roy.—*Editor.*

† RAM! RAM! RAM! This is usual with all devout Hindus, who die without the loss of consciousness.—*Editor.*

‡ Rammohun Roy.—*Editor.*

self-acquired. She was defeated in this attempt, and afterwards being reconciled to her son, although not to his errors, she died in the performance of menial services in the temple of Juggunnath in Orissa to which she voluntarily subjected herself as a penance.

Educated under such personal, domestic, and social influences, Rammohun Roy's powerful mind burst asunder the bands of pride and prejudice, interest and ambition, and early perceiving the withering and degrading effects of idolatry, he sought with a bold but skilful hand to overthrow the spiritual tyranny of which his countrymen are the victims. The Koran of Mohammad and the communications he held with Musalmans first threw a flood of light on his mind, but Mohammanism exists in India under two forms; one very corrupt, and the other more pure, and attaching himself to the latter, he was amongst them also made an object of persecution. From this, he took refuge in Calcutta, where he associated largely with Europeans, generally of comprehensive and enlightened minds, whose communications probably tended still further to expand his views, and to open up to him the duty and the prospect of awakening and enlightening his Hindoo countrymen.

The means that he employed for this purpose will admit on the present occasion to be but barely mentioned, without extended illustration. He revived a comparatively pure form of Hindooism well known in the West and South of India, but which had long become nearly extinct in Bengal. From this vantage ground, under the protection of many of the weightiest and most ancient Hindoo authorities, he was able to

direct many a vigorous attack against the strongholds of modern Hindooism. Of the Veds, the most sacred books of the Hindoos, he republished in the original text, and with vernacular translations and comments, several of those portions most remarkable for the elevation, purity and devotional character of their contents, and constituting the source from which the ancient and pure form of Hindooism draws its proofs and authorities. He republished also several of the works of Sankaráchárya, an ancient and celebrated Hindoo Reformer, besides several other ancient Hindoo writings, tending to promote the pure worship of God, and to shake Brahmanical authority. He formed the small but intelligent body of Hindoos who gradually started around him into a religious society* which held regular meetings for worship at which he himself often presided, and for which he composed a collection of devotional hymns,† as well as a series of discourses or sermons that were delivered by the learned assistants in attendance. His publications called forth the opposition of learned Brahmans through the press both in Calcutta and at Madras, and he promptly met in the field of argument the supporters of idolatry in both quarters of the country and effectually silenced them. His most valuable controversial publication, however, is one, not directed against any individual adversary, but against the entire system of Hindu idolatry, which he analyzes, refutes, and exposes with a cogency of reasoning based on a thorough acquaintance with the highest authorities, and with the actual condition of the Hindoo religion,

* The Bráhma Sabhá now called the Adi Brahma Samaj.—*Editor.*

† These are favorites now a days even with the orthodox Hindus.—*Editor.*

and enforced by a keenness of satire judiciously addressed to the known susceptibility of his countrymen to ridicule.* Rammohun Roy did not merely seek to overthrow : he also endeavored to build up. Nor was he content to build only on the foundation of the Veds : he made his countrymen acquainted with the heavenly teachings of Jesus Christ, which he selected from the gospels, and published for the benefit of his followers, as a means of leading them to a holier and more spiritual morality than that which their own writings inculcated.† His selection of the precepts of Jesus for publication with this view was by no means intended to cast any disparagement on the remaining portions of the gospels; for about the same time he zealously engaged with two Missionaries‡ in a design to translate the whole four gospels into Bengalee.

The effects of Rammohun Roy's labours in this department, on the moral and religious character of the Hindoos of Bengal cannot be fully estimated by any external appearance which they may present, because his friends and followers, unlike converts to Christianity, instead of standing apart from Hindoos, and Hindooism, have remained amongst them, and within its pale, and are endeavouring gradually to impregnate the whole of Hindoo society with their views. My opinion is that

* The author here probably refers to the publication entitled the *Pautalik prabodha*, the authorship of which had been screened by a pseudonym.—*Editor*.

† The original publication in Bengali not having been procurable, a fresh translation into that language was made by the present Editor, and published, at the cost of the Revd. C. H. A. Dall, in 1859.—*Editor*.

‡ Vide addenda.—*Editor*.

the system of Hindoo idolatry can scarcely yet be said to be shaken by any of the direct religious influences employed for that purpose in Bengal ; but I am at the same time convinced that the only serious shock that it has sustained is not that which has proceeded from foreigners from without, but that which has proceeded from within, from Rammohun Roy and his adherents, who alone possess the qualifications that can enable religious reformers to address alike the cultivated intellect and the popular sentiment of native Society.

2. When Rammohun Roy's mind was fully opened to a perception of the evils of idolatry, one of the most horrible and appalling forms of the superstitions prevailing among his countrymen was the burning of widows on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands. This practice early arrested his attention, excited his compassion, his indignation, and his shame, and called forth his most anxious and unwearied exertions for its abolition. To show you in connection with this subject the extent of the service which he rendered to the cause of humanity, I must go into some details in explanation of the practice.*

The condition of the female sex in India is most degraded. In youth, they are denied the benefit of instruction ; in marriage, they are the menial servants of their husbands ; and in widowhood, they were expected to show their devotion to their deceased lords by submitting to the most painful death. The husband of the woman who should consent thus to sacrifice herself even

* Vide addenda.—*Editor.*

although he may have been guilty of the murder of a brahman, the very acme of human guilt, or of any inferior crime, has his sins expiated and is saved from hell by her act; her husband's, her father's, and her mother's progenitors are all beatified, and she herself is delivered in a future birth from the degradation of the female form. If she clings to life, a life of austerity, of selfdenial, and of subjection, is her portion. The hardships imposed on Hindoo widows of pure caste are so severe and degrading that women of high spirit often preferred the funeral pile, while others submitted with patience and acted as menial servants to the female relatives of their late husbands decked in the ornaments of which they had been deprived: and others, at once to preserve life and to escape this harsh and contumelious treatment, renounced the restraints of caste and modesty, and sunk to the lowest depths of female degradation. The extent to which human life was annually sacrificed may be estimated from the returns made by the police to the Bengal Government for a single year. Those returns show that in the year 1823, the number of widows who burned on the funeral piles of their husbands within the Bengal Presidency, was of the Brahman Caste 234, of the Khatree Caste 35, of the Vaisya Caste 14, of the Sudra Caste 292, total 575. Of this total, 340 widows thus perished within the limits of the Calcutta Court of Circuit, which shows that the returns were given with accuracy only for the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, and suggests the inference that the number sacrificed beyond that limit was much greater than that actually reported; besides that, the

returns profess to extend only to the Bengal Presidency, leaving entirely out of view the two other Indian Presidencies, where, although the practice was certainly not so prevalent as in Bengal, it was by no means wholly unknown. The ages of the different individuals are also included in the returns to which I have referred, and they exhibit another feature of this horrible picture. Of the 575 victims of 1823, 109 were above sixty years of age; 226 were from forty to sixty; 208 were from twenty to forty, and 32 were under twenty years of age. Thus the tenderness and the beauty of youth, the ripened years and affection of the venerable matron, and the feebleness and decrepitude of old age alike fell victims. I have not in my possession at this time the official returns for any other year than that which I have quoted, but I have no reason to suppose that those of any other year, if they were within my reach, would exhibit a less number of victims. I believe that I speak strictly within the bounds of truth, when I assert, that at least from five to six hundred were annually sacrificed, and occurring as these atrocities did from day to day, and in the open face of day, there must have been on an average about two such murders perpetrated every day under the very eye of the British Government and its public functionaries, ever since the British obtained the sovereign power in Bengal in 1765.

Without previous experience, no one could have supposed that a Government calling itself civilized would have so long tolerated such an enormity; but in the early stages of British power in India, conscious weakness dictated prudence and stifled the voice of

humanity. Travellers in India recorded the facts of these widow burnings, but no one had the courage to protest against the toleration of such crimes, as far as I am aware, until Dr. Johns, an able and intelligent Baptist Missionary, published a pamphlet on the subject. The answer to his appeal was, Do you mean to overthrow the British Government in India by interfering with the religion of the natives? The reply was, Do you, a British, a civilized Government, mean any longer to tolerate deliberate and systematized murders perpetrated under the cloak of religion? The appeal was in vain. Other Missionaries seem to have been afraid to raise their voice against the practice, since that would have been to raise their voice against the Government, at whose pleasure they might legally be instantly deported from the country, as Dr. Johns actually was, although for another reason. With few exceptions, the public functionaries including the highest, the most learned, and the most religious, counselled the toleration of the practice, on the plea that the British were bound not to interfere with the religion of the natives, and in the distant hope that the progress of education and general enlightenment would gradually put an end to it. Such was the state of public opinion on this subject amongst Europeans in India, when Rammohun Roy arose, himself a native and thoroughly acquainted with all the details of the practice, and the motives of the perpetrators—a learned native and intimately conversant with the sacred authorities on which it was made to rest. In a series of publications, which were extensively circulated both in India and in England, and in India, both in

English and Bengalee, *i. e.* for the information and conviction both of English rulers, and native subjects, he exposed the villainies that were practised and tolerated under the name of religion. He showed that it was to obtain possession of the property to which the widow was legally entitled that her death was sought, and that the officiating brahmans, the instruments whose authority was employed to obtain the consent of the widows, were sharers of the spoil. He showed that the consent was often wrung from her while she was in the paroxysm of grief for the loss of a beloved husband, or in the delirium of intoxication produced by herbs purposely administered to her, or under the exhaustion of inanition from want of food purposely withheld, and consent once obtained was irrevocable. He showed the illegality of the practice of binding down the victim with ropes to the pile which prevented her escape, instead of being permitted in a state of freedom to enter the flames as a voluntary sacrifice which Hindoo law requires. He showed that the highest authorities of the Hindoo religion instead of rendering it imperative on widows, as idolatrous brahmans alleged, to burn in the funeral piles of their husbands, left it optional to them to do so, or to lead a virtuous life and even gave the highest honor to the latter alternative. His arguments on these and other collateral topics were irresistible and public opinion in the European community gradually changed, until at last, an energetic and benevolent noble man, Lord William Bentinck was sent ^{in 1828} to exercise the powers of Government in India, about 10 years ago, and he, in consultation with Rammohun Roy and other

friends of humanity, but not without much opposition and many forebodings from some of his own countrymen belonging to a class who are the friends of every abuse, because they are the enemies of all change, finally prohibited and abolished the murderous rite throughout the whole extent of the British dominions in India.* It is still practised in some native states, contrary to the earnest reclamations of the British Government; but throughout the British dominions, it has not only been prohibited under the severest penalties, but I am happy to add that it has been effectually suppressed, and the suppression submitted to without a murmur, except in the form of one or two petitions from interested brahmans who had the audacity to solicit permission to continue with impunity to imbrue their hands in the blood of their innocent countrywomen.† The abolition of these inhuman sacrifices was a great triumph to the cause of humanity, and for his bold, fearless, unflinching exertions in this cause, Rammohun Roy's name deserves to be held in everlasting remembrance.

3. Although in a case like this in which the rights and obligations of humanity were openly trampled on and violated, Rammohun Roy was unwilling to leave the redress of the evil to the slow operations of a progressive civilization and of more enlightened sentiments arising from improved education, he was by no means insensible to the value and importance of education as a means of

* Regulation XVII of 1829, Bengal Code.—*Editor*.

† It would have been of some service at the present day to have known who these pious Brahmans were.—*Editor*.

elevating the character and purifying the manners of his countrymen. I shall briefly advert to his most prominent exertions in the cause of education. In July 1823, in conformity with a provision contained in an Act of the Imperial Parliament, a General Committee of Public Instruction was constituted in Calcutta by the Government of India, for the promotion of the education of the natives. This Committee was composed exclusively of men holding high official employments, without having any practical experience in the business of education; or of men distinguished for their intimate acquaintance with the recondite learning of the Hindus and Musalmans. These gentlemen, not unnaturally gave too partial an attention to the promotion of that sort of learning in which they were themselves adepts, without much reference to its practical utility or to the wants of the millions, who were and are destitute of the very elements of knowledge. Rammohun Roy early saw the devious path in which the Committee was treading, and in the name of his countrymen, early in 1823, addressed an able and spirited remonstrance to the Government of Lord Amherst, then Governor General of British India. Extensively conversant himself with native learning, he earnestly protested against the almost exclusive appropriation of the educational fund to the mere encouragement of the study of its grammatical niceties, its metaphysical distinctions, its mystical philosophy, and its ceremonial theology, pouring contempt, in no measured terms, even on the Vedant system of doctrines, of which he has been mistakenly deemed a special advocate, as being abstruse in its speculations.

and unnatural in its tendencies, and soliciting on behalf of the Hindoo people, a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences. This document was handed over to the Education Committee, and by the Secretary of that body, a profound but self-sufficient oriental scholar,* was answered with a few contemptuous remarks, as if the deliberate sentiments of such a man as Rammohun Roy could be put down with a sneer. His opinions were published to the world, and continued with other causes to work on the minds of the community, until the return to Europe of the oriental scholar above referred to, who was the *primum mobile*, of the Committees' operations, when the Committee was displaced and their system abandoned. At this moment, the very branches of education which Rammohun Roy recommended are actively and ably taught in the Government Colleges in India, although with too exclusive a use of the English language to the neglect of the vernacular dialects, the languages of the ignorant many—a neglect which he would never have approved.

It was not to the effecting of this important change that he limited his educational exertions. He built schoolhouses, and established schools in which useful knowledge was gratuitously taught through the medium both of the English and native languages. He gave ardent and most zealous support to the missionaries of the Scottish Presbyterian Church in establishing in Calcutta a seminary in which Christian as well as

* Vide Addenda.—Editor.

general knowledge, is daily and gratuitously taught to five or six hundred native youths by missionary instructors; and following his example, one of his wealthiest friends and adherents gave still more liberal pecuniary encouragement to a similar school established by the same missionaries in the interior of the Jessore District in Bengal. No one saw more distinctly than Rammohun Roy the importance of cultivating the vernacular language of his countrymen as the most effectual medium of conveying instruction to them, and of influencing their sentiments, principles, and conduct; and in consequence all his most important controversial writings have appeared not only in Sanscrit for the information of the learned and in English for the information of foreigners, but in Bengali also, that the body of the people might be enlightened. In this, he showed the just and accurate view which he took of the means of influencing the minds of a whole people and his superiority to the prejudices of his learned countrymen who disdain to compose their works, except in Sanscrit; and look down upon their mother-tongue with contempt as unworthy to be employed for the communication of knowledge. Rammohun Roy's writings in Bengali are models of composition, a necessary effect of his comprehensive and logical mind, and correct and manly taste. It was not only in this indirect and accidental way that he sought to improve his native idiom, he also wrote and published a grammar of the Bengali language, which, although several grammars of that tongue have been written by Europeans, is the only one worthy of the name; and he has thus by the example he set in his

own multifarious native compositions, and by the theoretical rules which he has laid down in his grammar, contributed to rescue from contempt and neglect, and bring into deserved repute, a language possessing very rich materials, spoken by twenty-five millions* of human beings, and destined to be the medium of communication on all the subjects of literature and science, philosophy, and religion interesting to a people in a state of progressive civilization.

4. I should be doing injustice to the memory of Rammohun Roy, if I were to conclude without advertising to the deep interest which he took in the progress of good government throughout the world. His inquiries respecting this country† were frequent, earnest, and minute; and as far as he knew or understood, he admired its institutions, and loved and respected its people. When information reached Calcutta of the insurrection of the Isla de Leon in 1821, and of the consequent establishment of constitutional government in Spain, he gave a public dinner in the town hall of Calcutta, in honor of the auspicious event. Within the period of my own acquaintance with him, I well recollect the enthusiasm with which he heard of the similar temporary establishment of constitutional government in Portugal, and the fervent good wishes with which he watched the struggle of Greece against Turkish power. The French Revolution of 1830 was another of those events that gave him very high satisfaction. Connected as India is with England, it was

* At the present day, the number exceeds thirtyseven millions.—*Editor.*

† The United States of America.—*Editor.*

natural that he should share in the anxieties of British politics, narrowly watch the fluctuations of British parties, and endeavour to trace the causes and consequences, of the success or failure of great public questions. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the removal of Catholic disabilities, the accession of the Whigs to power in 1830, and the introduction and success of the Reform Bill which occurred whilst he was in England—all of these were subjects which attracted and fixed his most earnest attention, and called forth his ardent wishes, and in the case of the Reform Bill, his most active exertions.

But it was the politics of British India that he best understood, and in which his exertions were most useful. He established and conducted two native newspapers, one in Persian, and the other in Bengali,* and made them the medium of conveying much valuable political information to his countrymen. The freedom of the press was not enjoyed in his days in India, but the ultimately successful efforts made to acquire the liberty of unlicensed printing received his most determined support, although he thereby subjected himself to the frown of rank and office and power. A learned Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir Charles Grey† attacked, by one of his decisions on the Bench, the law of inheritance hitherto in force in the province of Bengal, and declared every disposition by a father of his ancestral real property, without the sanction of his sons and grand-

* See Addenda.—*Editor.*

† Subsequently M. P., and Commissioner with Lord Gosford to Canada.—*Author.*

sons, to be null and void. Rammohun Roy forthwith appeared to the rescue, and published an elaborate essay on the Rights of Hindus over ancestral property, according to the Law of Bengal, in which by a masterly and admirably reasoned legal argument, he showed that the decision in question, if not reversed, would be not merely a retrogression in the social institutions of the Hindu community of Bengal, mischievous in disturbing the validity of existing title to property and of contracts founded on the received interpretation of the law, but a violation of the charter of justice, by which the administration of the existing law of the people in such matters, is secured to the inhabitants of India. The decision was reversed by the highest court of appeal, and the people of Bengal continue to enjoy their proper law of inheritance inviolate. In another instance, the Executive Government of India passed a Regulation in 1828 authorizing its Revenue Officers to dispossess the holders of rentfree lands at their own discretion, without any judicial decree having been sought or obtained against the validity of the title to such lands. Rammohun Roy instantly placed himself at the head of the native land-holders of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, and in a petition of remonstrance to Lord William Bentinck, Governor General, protested against such arbitrary and despotic proceedings. The appeal was unsuccessful in India, was carried to England, and was there also made in vain; and at the present moment, if there is one cause more than another producing hatred and disaffection to the British Government in India, it is this measure, against which Rammohun Roy, both in India and

England, raised his powerful and warning voice on behalf of his countrymen whom he loved, and on behalf of the British Government to which he was in heart attached, and for whose honor and stability he was sincerely concerned. I will mention only one other direction which he gave to his political labours on behalf of his countrymen. While he was in England, the discussions preliminary to the removal of the East India Company's lease of India for another period of twenty years were in progress. In those discussions, Rammohun Roy warmly engaged; he was consulted by the British Ministers of the day; his evidence was given before Parliamentary Committees; and that evidence was embodied with some valuable additions in an Exposition of the Revenue and Judicial systems of India, which he published in England and which received much attention. Some of the judicious reforms which he suggested in that publication have been, and others deserve to be, adopted.

In the pursuit of various objects which I have attempted to describe—religious, philanthropic, educational, and political—he was, he would be, free, unshackled, and independent. If I may speak of my own experience of human life and observation of human character, I would say that I was never more thoroughly, deeply, and constantly impressed than when in the presence of Rammohun Roy, and in friendly and confidential converse with him, that I was in the presence of a man of natural and inherent genius, of powerful understanding, and of determined will, a will determined with singular energy and uncontrollable self-direction.

to lofty and generous purposes. He seemed to feel, to think, to speak, to act, as if he could not but do all this and that he must and could do it only in and from and through himself, and that the application of any external influence, distinct from his own strong will, would be the annihilation of his being and identity. He would be free, or not be at all. He must breathe an atmosphere of freedom, and not finding one readymade to his hand, he made one for himself. He felt with the old English poet,

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS,
and from this free domain, he unweariedly directed his attacks against those systems of spiritual, social, and political oppression of which by the necessity of circumstances he was part and parcel, either as actor or sufferer, as priest or victim : and most earnestly—to his high honor be it spoken—against that system of spiritual and social tyranny which conferred on himself peculiar and invidious and pernicious distinctions and privileges. Love of freedom was perhaps the strongest passion of his soul—freedom not of the body merely, but of the mind—freedom not of action merely, but of thought. Almost instinctively he tore away and trampled under foot the fetters which the religion of his own people, the usages of his own country, his family, descent, and his personal position, had imposed. If obstacles arose in his path, he fearlessly overturned them. If an attack was made even by implication merely, on his mental freedom, he resisted it with an irrepressible sense of deep injury and insult. In illustration of this feature of his character, I shall mention a single incident. He was personally

acquainted with Dr. Middleton, the first Bishop of Calcutta, who naturally endeavoured to convert him to Christianity; but not content with the usual arguments drawn from the truth, and excellence of our religion, he presented the inducement, at least as Rammohun Roy understood him, of the honor and repute, the influence and the usefulness he would acquire by becoming the apostle of India, the first great promulgator of the Christian doctrine to his countrymen. I think it quite probable that the bishop may have merely expressed the pious but inconsiderate wish that Rammohun Roy might become the apostle and promulgator of Christian truth in India, without meaning to offer a worldly motive which just so far as it influenced his mind, would have rendered the desired conversion worthless. But Rammohun Roy did not so understand it; and in relating the circumstance to me, spoke in language and with the feelings of bitter indignation that he should have been deemed capable of being, influenced by such a consideration or by any consideration but the love of truth and goodness. I do not recollect that he informed me what answer he made to the bishop, but he stated that he had never afterwards visited him. He felt as if the pure and unsullied integrity of his mind, his personal honour, and independence had been assailed by the presentation to him of a low, and unworthy motive and he resented accordingly.

This tenacity of personal independence, this sensitive jealousy of the slightest approach to an encroachment on his mental freedom was accompanied with a very nice perception of the equal rights of others, even of

those who differed most widely from him in religion and politics, and still more remarkably even of those whom the laws of nature and of society subjected to his undisputed control. He employed no direct means, no argument, or authority, no expostulation or entreaty to turn his sons from the idolatrous practices and belief, in which they had been educated by the female members of his family and by the brahman priests whom they consulted and followed. He gave them a good education; by his personal demeanour, secured a place in their esteem and affection; set them an example in his life and writings; and then left them to the influence of idolatrous associations on the one hand, and to the unfettered exercise of their reason on the other. His eldest son,* the hope of his heart, for some time after attaining mature age, continued an idolator; but before his father's death, with his younger brother†, abandoned the superstition of the country, and zealously coöperated with his father; thus amply rewarding Rammohun Roy for his enlightened confidence in the power of truth and for his self-denying recognition of the mental freedom even of his own children.

The love of freedom, so strikingly characteristic of the man, so strikingly uncharacteristic of the abject people,‡ the natives of Bengal, of whom he was one;

* Radbikaprasad, who died without leaving male issue.—*Editor.*

† Ramaprasad Roy, who lived to attain eminence at the bar of the highest Judicial Tribunal of Bengal, and was the first native Justice elect of the High Court at Fort Willia tho' he was prevented by death from sitting on the bench.—*Editor.*

‡ This passage is sure to be misunderstood by the thoughtless portion of my countrymen.—*Editor.*

was not a wild, irregular, violent, and destructive impulse. It was a rational conviction springing from his belief in the noble purposes which a well-regulated and self-restrained liberty is capable of conferring on the individual and on society. He did not seek to limit the enjoyment of it to any class, or colour, or race, or nation, or religion. His sympathies embraced all mankind; but he never lost sight of the moral and social purposes which are the ends of liberty, and when he looked round on his countrymen, he saw that they were incapable of appreciating and enjoying it to its full extent. They were capable of appreciating more than they enjoyed, and that he claimed for them, and in part obtained. They were not capable of appreciating much that he himself was capable of enjoying, and that he claimed neither for himself nor for them. He saw—a man of his acute mind and local knowledge could not but see—the selfish, cruel, and almost insane errors of the English in governing India, but he also saw that their system of Government and policy had redeeming qualities not to be found in the native governments. Without seeking to destroy, therefore, his object was to reform and improve the system of foreign government to which his native country had become subject; and without stimulating his countrymen to discontent or disaffection, his endeavour was by teaching them a pure religion, and promoting among them an enlightened education to qualify them for the enjoyment of more extensive civil and political franchises than they yet possessed. He admitted that his countrymen were unfit for national independence, incapable of self-government, and he join-

od with some noble-minded, far-seeing Englishmen who have expressed the opinion that the wisest and most honourable course, the justest and most humane, which England can pursue towards India is, by education and by a gradual development of the principle of civil and political liberty in the public institutions she establishes and sanctions, to prepare the natives ultimately to take the government of their own country into their own hands. To cooperate in bringing about such a result, was one of Rammohun Roy's unceasing aims; but those who sow the seed, are not always those who reap the harvest, or enjoy its fruit. In this case, there was no disappointment, for the change must be the work of generations, if not centuries. But I hope and trust that the time will come when the natives of India will constitute an enlightened and independent nation of free, self-governed men; and I venture to predict that the name of Rammohun Roy will not then be forgotten.





Addenda.

NOTES.

- Page 9. 'He zealously engaged with two Missionaries' &c. The two Missionaries were, William Yates and William Adam. Mr. Yates took offence, and withdrew from the connection.—*Author* (1st January 1878).
- P. 10 With reference to the burning of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands, Mr. Montgomery Martin (*Eastern India*, London 1838, vol. 2, p. 130) says 'This horrid custom is now slowly abolished; I established in India a journal in four languages, which led to its safe and immediate cessation in 1829.' The passage speaks for itself — *Editor*
- P. 17 'A profound but self-sufficient Oriental scholar' &c. 'My recollection at this distance of time is somewhat vague; but I think it was, not H. H. Wilson, but J. C. C. Sutherland the author of some well-known translations of law-books from the Sanskrit — *Author* (1878).
- P. 20. 'Two native newspapers.' &c. One of these was the *Kaumudi* I believe; of the other, I have not been able to ascertain the name — *Editor*.
-

ACME
BOOKBINDING CO., INC.

SEP 7 1984

100 CAMBRIDGE STREET
CHARLESTOWN, MASS.



DATE DUE

~~DEC 02 2000~~

~~JAN 14 2002~~

~~FEB 04 2003~~

